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ABSTRACT

There have been few, if any, significant changes in educational policy regarding the provision of adult literacy education in India over the past two decades. The changes that have taken place in India's adult literacy programs have occurred in the realm of technology rather than ideology, thereby supporting a continuity in the existing distributions of economic, social, and political goods within the nation. India's present cultural and political climate have resulted in an educational policy that is functionalist in the sense of being geared to provide the labor force necessary to keep the system going and populist in the sense of being geared toward gaining the votes necessary to win elections. This in turn has translated into greater investments in higher education and proportionally less in constitutionally mandated universalization of elementary education. The most important official confirmation of the need for expanding adult education services in India came in the form of the National Policy Resolution of 1968. The first important initiative in adult education--the National Adult Education Program (NAEP)--was not established until 1978. It defined education as literacy, functionality, and conscientization, and although its structures were eventually established, they did not always function effectively. When Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980, the program was renamed (it was now simply called the AEP) and expanded from a 10-month to a 3-year program with emphasis on health, family planning, and functional progams. Unfortunately, the AEP was not extremely successful either. The main thrust of the new National Program of Adult Education (established in 1986) is like its predecessors in that its main thrust is efficiency rather than equity and its general mode is technocratic. (MN)

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A Policy Analysis of Adult Literacy Education in India: Across the Two National Policy Reviews of 1968 and 1986

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A Policy Analysis of Adult Literacy Education in India:
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Abstract

A policy analysis of adult literacy education in India must answer the question of how the new policy will redistribute educational goods in the Indian society; and how, in turn, this education policy might affect the redistribution of economic, social, and political goods among groups and social classes within the nation. A close examination of the Indian scene points out that there has been no dramatic change either in the political culture or in the political agenda since Independence, and, consequently, no significant change in educational policy in general and in adult literacy education policy in particular, should be expected. Changes from earlier adult education policy, if any, would essentially be in the realm of technology, not ideology, ensuring continuity in the existing distributions of economic, social, and political goods within the nation, with marginal gains, filtering most gradually from the have´s to the have-not´s. The process could perhaps be accelerated somewhat if the Indian intelligentsia would take up a progressive and activist role in the promotion of adult literacy education. Prospects for this happening are, again, not too bright.

A Policy Analysis of Adult Literacy Education in India: Across the Two National Policy Reviews of 1968 and 1986

Justifications for a policy analysis of adult literacy education (1) in India are not hard to find. In countries where large proportions of populations have never been to school (2), adult education will be the only education available to many. Thus, adult education can serve distributive justice. On the other hand, adult education, at its best, is directly related to learner needs and is immediately usable in resocializing individuals and transforming communities. Therefore, it is possible to assert that adult literacy and adult education are inherently progressive, even radical.

Definition and Method

Policy is more than a statement of principles or a set of rules and regulations. While policy must be principled, and does seek to regulate through rule-making, its essential nature is distributive. Policy is the instrument of power of the governing elite for directing and harnessing social power for preferred social outcomes. Indeed, policy making is involved if, and only if, there is an intent on the part of policy makers to bring about a new and preferred distribution of economic, status and power goods (and consequently, of educational goods) among social groups and classes. Of course, the policy intent can sometimes be phony and the future preferred may be no more than a perpetuation of the status quo (3).

If the nature of policy is distributive, then the definition of policy analysis (4) is an examination of the desirability and the feasibility of a policy's distributive intent. The desirability question is ideological, focussed on the justness of intended distributions. The feasibility question is technological, focussed on the practicalities of implementation.

Technology, as broadly interpreted, has two practical dimensions: institutional capacity and professional competence. The question for institutional analysis (5) is this: Are the institutions, as existing or as envisaged, likely to have the capacity and resources to implement the policy intent? Professional analysis will involve questions of how well available professional knowledge is being utilized in the conception, design, and implementation of policy.

Policy analysis exercises can take place at the front end, that is, as the policy is being formulated. Or, these analyses may be conduced during or at the end of a policy cycle. [See the table below.] Ideally, policy analysis should be a continuous process that takes place throughout the life-cycle of a particular policy initiative.

Components of the process of policy analysis

	At the front end	During the process of implementation	At the end of the policy cycle
I. Ideological Analysis			
II. Technological Analysis:			
(a) Institutional Capacity			
(b) Professional Competence			

A Policy Analytic Model of

Adult Literacy Education for Development

There is a dialectical relationship between policy and the political culture which proclaims that particular policy. First, the political culture sets the limits within which policy making will take place. Then, the policy as formulated, in the process of its implementation, will redefine the "living" political culture and thereby change the context of freedoms and constraints imposed on future policy initiatives. Social change results from this dialectic between policy and political culture. Sometimes the change is progressive, at other times it is regressive. It is almost always incremental (6).

The political culture, as defined by the triangle of the economic, the social and the political, determines what kind of a

development model will be selected by the policy elite within that culture. The choice is, of course, not deterministic in the absolute sense, but has to be congenial. In turn, the selected developmental model makes congenial choices of educational strategies (7). [See model below.]

A policy analytic model of

adult literacy education for development

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY / MODEL		
Evolutionary	Reformist	Revolutionary
Motivational-developmental model	Incremental developmental model	Structural-developmental model
EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES		
General goals: Transmission of cultural values	General goals: Social reproduction with built-in mobility	General goals: Transformation of culture and technology
Adult education as charity	Adult education as ameliorative	Adult education as integrative
Literacy projects for the professionalization of labor	Literacy programs for reform under State guidance	Literacy campaigns for transformation of existing political relationships

The various horizontal lines in the model above show ideal types of developmental models, and approaches to adult education and literacy promotion. The various descriptors should, however, be seen to represent predominance, not purity.

Viewed vertically, the countries that emphasise individual motivations in their development strategies, are likely to use education as an instrument in the transmission of cultural values, are likely to look at adult education as an act of charity and justify literacy work in small projects within economic units by way of the professionalization of labor. Countries following the incremental developmental model are likely to be using their educational system for social reproduction with some built-in mobility, will look at their adult education programs as ameliorative, that is, second chance education, and will develop national or regional literacy programs under effective state control. Finally, revolutionary societies will use developmental models that seek to destroy existing structures, are likely to use education for the transformation of both culture and technology, will use adult education to integrate all those "standing outside politics" into the political system, and will prefer the mass campaigns approach for literacy promotion (8). Once again, however, membership in these clusters should be seen as congenial rather than deterministic. The relationships between and among these various categories will have to be dialectical for social change to occur at all.

The Case of India

History and politics together can provide the context for understanding India's policies of adult literacy education and their performance in the past and the present.

P. Sandeep (9) provides a useful cultural perspective.

The Indian people, he points out, have fully internalized the hierarchical social relationships preached in the Rigveda, Bhagavadgita, and Manusmriti; and, over the centuries, have institutionalized these relationships within the Indian caste system. In more recent Indian history, under the British, the hierarchical caste relationships had been further reinforced and rationalized to the advantage of the dominant upper classes. In India today, casteism is alive and well. As a result, the Indian people feel absolutely disoriented to the new values of democracy, socialism, and secularism enshrined in the Constitution. Indeed, attempts at demythification of old values through adult education is often seen by them as anti-religious.

Indian politics since Independence in 1947 has been conservative, not progressive. Gunnar Myrdal (10) characterized the Indian liberation movement between the two world wars as "an upper-class protest movement" despite Mahatama Gandhi's appeal to the masses. The success of the Indian Independence movement, according to Myrdal, did not lead to transfer of power to the people but to the urban Western-educated elite in coalition with landlords, merchants and moneylenders of rural India. India under Nehru (1947-64) had all the appurtenances of democracy, but in reality it was democracy from the above. Conditions may have indeed worsened. In a more recent piece of political analysis, Arvind N. Das (11) saw democracy in India being practiced by all means other than democratic. The political elite had combined the invocation of grand principles with the practice of Realpolitik at its lowest. The politics of confrontation had taken the place of the politics of participation. Political

support was crafted through manipulation not through education and motivation of people.

The Indian economy continues to be marked by duality and disparity. More than half the population lives below the poverty line defined by the Government of India as annual family income of 6,000 rupees (about US$ 465) in 1986. India is an economy of scarcities, with a concomitant "morality of scarcities." Ends are sought to be achieved by whatever means. Consequently, the social fabric of India is under tremendous tension. Casteism, communalism, and provincialism are rampant. Violence is increasing in the society.

Yet, development is on the political agenda. As in most other Third World countries, development is an important source of legitimization for the new governing elite. The ideology of modernization is essentially Western and capitalist (12), with a healthy dose of central planning (13). The development model of choice is the motivational-developmental model as socio-economic change is first legislated and then subverted. The underlying theme is gradualism -- prosperity filtering from the entrepreneur to the disadvantaged, slowly and without conflict.

From the foregoing, some anticipations can be built about policies of "education for development" in India. The present culture and politics of India allow an educational policy that is functionalist in being able to provide the necessary manpower for keeping the system going, and populist in being able to win the popularity contest at election time. This means greater investments in higher education and proportionally less in

constitutionally mandated universalization of elementary education. This means development of some elite centers of education for the privileged surrounded by a sea of sub-mediocrity. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of a learning society, adult education in such a scenario can be anticipated to have the role only of amelioration and pacification. It will have to be a sector of more rhetoric and less reality. It will have populist objectives and petty resource allocations. And even what is given by the state will be most of it captured by the agents of the state and by the vested interests at all the various levels of the adult education system.

Yet, we suggest, that the adult education policies to be presented and analysed below, be approached with a sense of realism rather than of cynicism. The dialectic between tradition and modernity, between power and powerlessness, between prosperity and penury, between rhetoric and reality, and between progressive action and subversion of gains, is by no means frozen. There is both scope and hope for change within these set of conditions. Adult education does and can have a role to play in India´s future, if the intelligentsia would play a progressive and activist role in influencing the dialectic.

Forerunners to the New Policy of Adult Education

Education of adults had been a cultural tradition in India for centuries, but it was contact with the British that gave adult education in India its new identity. By 1917, adult education had been incorporated in the struggle for independence (14). Ironically, it was after Independence that adult education lost

ground as the government sought to train high level manpower for the modernization of the economy. Figures for expenditures incurred on adult education (15) tell the story:

Expenditures on Adult Education

Plan I 1951-56	Plan II 1956-61	Plan III 1961-66	Plan IV 1969-74	Plan V 1974-79
50	40	20	59	326
(3.5)	(1.6)	(0.4)	(0.1)	(0.3)

All figures in the table above are in millions of rupees. Figures in parantheses are percentage of total allocations to education.

The Education Commission Report and
The National Policy Resolution of 1968

While resources for adult education were scarce, expert reports and resolutions were not. The most compelling theme of the 1964-65 Education Commission Report (16) was the equalization of educational opportunity. The report sought to prick the conscience of the nation by pointing out that some twenty years after independence in 1947, adult literacy was still around 28.6 per cent; and the universalization of elementary education upto age 14 years mandated to be achieved by 1960 was yet far away. The commissioners asked for the universalization of elementary education by 1986. They also asked for a serious attack on illiteracy using a combination of the selective and the mass approach that would mobilize all men and women available in

the country, including teachers and students. The report suggested the establishment of a National Board of Adult Education to provide national focus and direction to literacy work and asked that voluntary agencies be enabled to undertake literacy work whenever possible.

The National Policy Resolution of 1968, in accepting the recommendations of the 1964-66 Education Commission Report, agreed that adult education was essential not only for accelerating programs of production, especially in agriculture, but also in quickening the tempo of national development in general. Adult education was necessary for people's participation in the working of democratic institutions, for national integration and for realizing the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society (17). The first important initiative in adult education promotion in India had, however, to wait until 1978.

NAEP: An Event of Great Significance Between the Two National Policy Reviews

It is impossible to discuss the new adult education policy of 1986 without reference to the National Adult Education Progam (NAEP), launched in 1978 by the short-lived Janata Government of Prime Minister Morarji Desai (18). For the first time in the history of India, adult education was put on the educational agenda of the nation and thereby made central to the development approach that would be pursued. Resources were matched with words. Two hundred crores of rupees were promised in the VI Plan for adult education, more than six-fold increase over the provision of Rs. 32 crores in the V Plan.

Adult education was defined as literacy, functionality and conscientization. In a country that was 65 per cent illiterate as the NAEP was being formulated, adult literacy had to be a core component of an adult education program. Functionality would teach practical skills to improve productivity. The third, and the most important component from the point of view of a policy analyst was conscientization. The poor and the disadvanaged -- scheduled tribes and scheduled castes, and women -- had to be made critically aware of their condition and organized to transform it. The state would act in behalf of the weeker sections of the society to save them from exploitation by the stronger sections.

NAEP used generative targeting of population to be covered. The initial focus would be on the age group 15-35 years -- the one hundred million, supposedly the most active, in productive processes of the nation.

The NAEP was easily the most sophisticated planning exercises, and created a potentially effective infrastructure to guide, administer and deliver adult education services to the people. During the two years of NAEP, 1978-80, a network of organizations came into being that would compare favorably with the infrastructure of the formal school system. At the center, a National Board of Adult Education was established and the Directorate of Adult Education was adequately strengthened. At the state level were established State Boards of Adult Education, State Directorates of Adult Education and State Resource Centers (SRC's). These SRC's would produce need-based instructional materials in regional and subregional langauges for learners and

teachers; provide training to functionaries at various levels; provide technical assistance to individuals and organizations requiring such assistance; and conduct applied research and evaluation and monitoring at the State level.

At the district level, there would be District Adult Education Officers, with their District Resource Centers. Finally, there would be Project Officers at the Block level looking after learner centers in the villages. There would be one teacher for 30 learners; one supervisor for 30 teachers; one project officer for 10 supervisors; and with around 100 villages to each Block, all the 500,000 villages of India would be covered by the NAEP.

The NAEP, even though, a government initiated program did try to make it a peoples´ program. Voluntary agencies would play an important part as also the universities. As many as 30,000 voluntary agencies and 5,000 universities and colleges were sought to be drawn into the program. Strangely enough, and perhaps for crass political reasons, the Janata Government kept out political parties and their mass organizations of women, youth, workers and peasants; all-India cultural, religious and youth organizations; and federations and associations of teachers, and employees in trades and industries.

Evaluation of the NAEP

Whatever was under the government´s control got done, more or less (19). Whatever required mobilization of the people did not always get done. Structures did get established; but functions were not always performed effectively. Among the three

instructional functions, literacy (as the technology of codification and decodification) did best, followed by functionality. Conscientization and critical awareness did not come either to learners or their teachers.

There was the expected scramble for jobs within the system and the expected nepotism and siphoning of the resources by vested interests. Yet, during 1978-80 , some 130,000 literacy centers may have been active, where some 3,640,000 adults were enrolled in classes to last ten months. At the least, ten per cent of those enrolled learned to read and write. Thirty thousand functionaries -- instructors, supervisors and writers of books and primers -- were trained. Some 3,000 literacy and post-literacy texts and materials were published, though the decentralization in the production of materials did not always work. A start was made with monitoring and evaluation (20).

From NAEP to AEP

Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980 after two years in a political exile, and proceeded to tinker with the NAEP to claim ownership and to exorcise it of the ghost of Desai (21). The NAEP was reviewed by a specially established national committee (22) and a "new" program, now called AEP (23) was promulgated as part of Mrs. Gandhi's 20-point program for the removal of poverty.

The program stayed with old curriculum content and promised to serve the same constituencies identified by NAEP -- weaker sections of the society, women, scheduled tribes and schedule castes. The AEP would stay with age group 15-35 years,

but would adjust the target for completion by five years from 1985 to 1990. The infrastructure established under the NAEP would be retained.

There were some important changes that should interest a policy analyst. The adult education program became a government program and the burden of funding and implementation was divided between the center and the states. That would also shift the blame for failure to the states. A large allocation of Rs. 1,280 million was made on adult education during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) under Mrs. Gandhi, but only Rs. 600 million will come from the center. The other Rs. 680 million would come from the states -- a somewhat uncertain prospect.

Mrs. Gandhi threw most of the voluntary associations out of the AEP, claiming that most of them had politicised their work; and, worse, had made corrupt use of the government grants received. Instead, she demanded more from students. Altogether no more than 20-30 per cent of the program will be undertaken outside the government. However, it was hoped that voluntary associations would be able to contribute considerably to the program through innovations and adaptations which it was said could only occur within such institutional settings.

Finally, Mrs. Gandhi tried to introduce "realism" in the teaching-learning process. Ten months were not enough to teach literacy, functionality and awareness. Now it would be a three-year program in three phases:

Phase 1 -- of about 300-350 hours spread over a year to include basic literacy, general education with emphasis on

health and family planning, functional programmes relating to learners' vocations, and familiarity with laws and policies affecting the learners;

Phase 2 -- of about 150 hours spread over a year to reinforce literacy skills and its use to daily life. This phase would include appreciation of science in relation to one's environment, components of geography, history and country's cultural heritage etc. It would also contribute to the improvement in all vocational skills.

Phase 3 -- of about 100 hours spread over a year to achieve reasonable degree of self-reliance.

While apparently it all made good sense, the new schedule would postpone results from literacy program even further than before and would effectively achieve "the schooling" of adult literacy and thereby remove any possibility of its becoming a popular movement.

The Second Educational Policy Review

Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister on the assassination of his mother, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The nation was reeling under the shock of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and was bewildered by the organized communal violence against the Sikhs that followed. The new Prime Minister was expected to perform miracles in healing the nation and taking it forward to prosperity.

There were, of course, promises to serve the poor and to defend the weak. But there was never any expectation of any move towards popular change for a new society. The only thing new was the new rhetoric of technology to move into the twenty-

first century. Entrepreneurial India had to take charge and produce the wealth for all to share. Education, of course, would provide the training for entrepreneurship and the opportunity for social mobility.

Why a New Educational Policy?

There were reasons other than educational for the 1986 educational policy review. The government needed to create an impression of moving quickly along new directions and needed support and legitimization from the public. But the Indian education was indeed in need of repair. There were within the system contradictory demands for expansion and relevance. An honest attempt was indeed necessary to gear the educational system for a unified India whose integrity was in danger on the eve of the twenty-first century.

Numbers tell the story of the educational inheritance of Rajiv Gandhi. While all figures do not relate to Rajiv's year of ascedence to power, nor do all of the statistics relate to the same year, yet they do present a useful context for speculation of the possible and the probable in regard to the role of education for development in India.

In 1987, India (24) was estimated to have a population of 780 million. By the year 2,000 it would be the most populous country in the world with a population of one billion people, knocking China from that position.

Estimates for 1985 showed an adult literacy rate of 43.5 (57.2 for Males and 25.2 for Females) among those 15 years of age and older. Universalization of primary education remains a

dream. In 1983, gross enrolment ratio for primary education was 90 (105 for Males and 73 for Females). Net enrolment rates will of course be much lower. Secondary gross enrolment ratio for 1983 was 34. Percentage enrolled in technical and vocational education in 1975 (no later figures are available) was a mere 0.7. Education claimed 9.6 per cent of the public expenditure (1981 figures) and 3.2 per cent of the GNP (1982 figures). Both formal and nonformal adult education needed fixing.

The Focus of the New Educational Policy

The first shot was fired by the new Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in his first national broadcast on January 1985. There were three themes on his mind: national unity and integration and a work ethic; qualitative inputs in education reflecting technological advances and organic linkages of education with productive forces in all the different sectors; and an effective operational strategy to "germinate and radiate excellence and quality in education through certain nodal points like Central Schools or by the establishment of pace-setting schools in each district."

The Ministry of Education of the Government of India followed up on the Prime Minister's broadcast with elaborating and defining the Challenge of Education (25). The 1968 education policy, it said, had been both imaginative and purposeful in its thrusts. Desired improvements had not, however, materialize, because neither the resources nor the measures for restructuring the system were put in place. This is what the new policy would seek to address.

Peoples' Participation in the Policy Review

The Ministry sought to involve all the various stakeholders in the review of the educational policy. Various constituencies of citizens, students, teachers and educators, journalists, business, politicians, and others were asked to send in their comments. State governments provided their reviews of the policy document on the basis of state, district, subregional, and block level seminars and discussions (26). It is difficult to say how the process actually worked and how the inputs from the public once received were systematically fed back into the processes of decision-making.

Adult Literacy Education under the New Educational Policy of 1986

The main thrust of the new educational policy seems to be efficiency, not equity. The general mode is technocratic. Adult education and adult literacy are part of the new policy initiative, but are by no means central to the plan for the Indian future.

The New Alphabet Soup: NPAE

The newest alphabet soup is NPAE (National Program of Adult Education), but the soup looks, smells and tastes the same. There is indeed a remarkable continuity between the old policy of adult education and the new. The summary statement relating to adult education included in the 1986 policy statement deserves to be quoted in full:

ADULT EDUCATION

4.10 Our ancient scriptures define education as that which liberates -- i.e. provides the instruments for liberation from ignorance and oppression. In the modern world, it would naturally include the ability to read and write, since that is the main instrument of learning. Hence crucial importance of adult education, including adult literacy.

4.11 The critical development issue today is the continuous upgradation of skills so as to produce manpower resources of the kind and the number required by the society. Since participation by beneficiaries in the developmental programmes is of crucial importance, systematic programmes of adult education linked with national goals such as alleviation of poverty, national integration, environmental conservation, energisation of the cultural creativity of the people, observance of the small family norm, promotion of women's equality, etc. will be organized in the existing programmes, reviewed and strengthened.

4.12 The whole Nation must pledge itself to eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group. The Central and State Governments, political parties and their mass organisations, the mass media and educational institutions must commit themselves to mass literacy programmes of diverse nature. It will also have to involve on a large scale teachers, students, youth, voluntary agencies, employers, etc. Concerted efforts will be made to harness various research agencies to improve the pedagogical

aspects of adult literacy. The mass literacy programme would include, in addition to literacy, functional knowledge and skills, and also awareness among learners about the socio-economic reality and the possibility to change it.

4.13 A vast programme of adult and continuing education will be implemented through various ways and channels, including --

(a) establishment of centres in rural areas for continuing education;

(b) worker´s education through the employers, trade unions and concerned agencies of government;

(c) post-secondary education institutions;

(d) wider promotion of books, libraries and reading rooms;

(e) use of radio, TV and films, as mass and group learning media;

(f) creation of learners´ groups and organisations;

(g) programmes of distance learning;

(h) organizing assistance in self-learning; and

(i) organising need and interest based vocational training programmes.

The above statement is quite complete and comprehensive. Only a few of the themes need to be further expanded to set up a discussion for analysis.

The Program of Action (29) published by the government postpones the time targets. The 100 million adults between the ages of 15-35 would now wait until 1995 to become all fully literate: 40 million of them to be covered by 1990 and another 60

million by 1995. The constituencies of the NPAE have not changed, however. There is the promise of affirmative action in adult education on behalf of women, scheduled castes and tribes and other disadvantaged minorities.

In terms of the curricular content of the adult education program, the trinity of literacy, functionality and critical awareness remains. The phrase "critical awareness" is preferred over "conscientization" and critical awareness itself is expanded to include awareness of "the national goals, of development programmes, and for liberation from oppression." National integration must be taught "through insistence on observance of secular, scientific and moral values," thereby contributing to democratic and socialist ideals.

There is unabashed belief in the magic of technology. There is promise for the "application of science and technology, and pedagogical research for improving the pace and environment of learning." The eradication of illiteracy is thus seen as a two-pronged "Technical and Societal Mission." "In pursuance of the Mission, effort will be made to (i) improve the physical environment, power supply and the illumination etc. of the Adult Education Centres; (ii) facilitate and expedite preparation, printing, distribution of topical and relevant learning materials and learning aids on a dencentralised basis; (iii) enrich the process of learning with audio-visual materials by enlarging the range of Television and Radio broadcasts and also by developing cheaper and sturdier equipment; (iv) reduce the time-lag between pedagogic research and the assimilation of its results in the

teaching-learning processes; and (v) create inter-active environment between the electronic teaching devices and the learners."

In addition to the existing infrastructures, there is the promise to create "dynamic management structures to cope with the target envisioned." Chinese democratic centralism will appear in the Indian version: there will be a centralised policy framework and direction combined with decentralization of the planning and implementation process and functional autonomy. There will be clear delineation of responsibility to enforce operational accountability; and mechanism for ensuring the effective participation of both functionaries, community leaders and beneficiaries in planning and day-to-day implementation of the program at the grassroot level.

The critical level in the management will remain to be the Project, "an administratively viable and functionally autonomous field agency with complete responsibility for eradication of illiteracy and the organisation of continuing education programmes in a compact area." The critical operational unit would remain to be the Adult Education Centre (AEC) organised at the village or mahalla level.

The National initiatives and resources will be well integrated with decision making networks at the state level through the establishment of special commissions and executive committees. The district, tehsil and thana level administrative machinery will be involved in NPAE to ensure support for "awareness-oriented adult education programmes."

Management information systems (MIS's) will be developed

at all appropriate levels and special evaluation studies undertaken whenever necessary. "Maximum attention will be paid to the subject of learner evaluation -- the purpose being to ensure that all adult learners attain a level in literacy and numeracy which would enable them to continue learning in a self-reliant manner." Evaluation of awareness will be conducted through participatory methods. Internal evaluation will be complemented with external evaluation.

Partners in Implementation

NPAE is seen as a cooperative endeavour between the central government and the states with full involvement of the community and the functionaries concerned. At the same time, political parties and mass organizations of workers, peasants, women, youth and students; the entire system of educational institutions; the mass media; and the development departments that must utilize services of adult education will be expected to play the appropriate role in achieving the objectives of NPAE. Voluntary agencies and social activist groups will be welcome to collaborate as long as they can run programmes in conformity with the objectives of the NPAE.

Building on What is There

NPAE will build upon what already exists through reorganization, coordination, and extension of efforts. The already existing programs of Rural Functional Literacy Projects (RFLP) and State Adult Education Programmes (SAEP) will be given greater flexibility in project structure; encouraged to use

spoken languages of the learner; conduct better training of functionaries; increase number of women instructors; decentralize the supervisory system; and assure continuity of programs in the field.

Existing programs of workers education will be brought into greater conformity with NPAE. The Central Board of Workers Education will take up programs of literacy and workers education; and invite much greater involvement of trade unions. Shramik Vidyapeeths (Workers Institutes) will pay greater attention to rural workers, women workers, prevention of child labor and workers' productivity. The NPAE will, of course, be more than simple reorganization of already existing programs. There will be a massive additional effort in the form of launching of a mass literacy program.

Mass Functional Literacy Program

The mass functional literacy program would mobilize the energies of the country's youth, teachers, workers and peasants. Students are required to undertake literacy as "study service" -- "specific projects taken up as part of work experience and social/national service, which would be reflected in the students' final result sheets." Incentives would be provided at an institutional level of universities, colleges, higher secondary schools, and secondary schools, for eradicating illiteracy from a well-defined area. Trade unions, Panchayati Raj agencies and other representative organizations of people will be encouraged to undertake literacy work; and, of course, individuals will be asked to make personal commitment through voluntary service.

Linkages with Development Agencies and Programs

An important theme in the new program is the establishment of linkages between adult education work and development departments. A literacy component -- the Functional Literacy of Women (FLOW) -- will be introduced into the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) as in all other programs for women, scheduled castes and tribes. Literacy will also be introduced into all labor welfare programmes, and employers will be required, if necessary by law, to organize literacy and skills development programs for all their employees. At another level of coordination, special literacy primers and other reading materials will be developed for the beneficiaries of programs such as IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme).

The summary statement on policy of adult literacy education reproduced above lists the components of a massive continuing education program to help learners to continue with their formal education or to obtain further capacitation in skills.

An Analysis of the New Adult Education Policy

The distributive intents of the policy of adult literacy education as stated in the new policy documents remain laudable. Attention continues to be focussed on the weaker sections of the Indian polity -- women, scheduled castes and tribes and other minorities with a history of abuse and exploitation abetted by the culture. There is no revolutionary fervor, but interest in gradual reform seems to be there.

The content of adult education also remains justifiable:

literacy for independent learning; skills development for more productive participation in the economy; and awareness of own social condition. One should note the cooling of the rhetoric of liberation and empowerment in the 1986 policy statement as compared with the NAEP document of 1979; and the expansion of the definition of awareness to include awareness of government's development programs.

The institutional infrastructure for the implementation of the program, inherited from NAEP/AEP may have been somewhat strengthened by greater preoccupation with more effective management. However, the locus of control seems to be shifting further towards the center. A greater articulation of center-state relationships is envisaged. The center is to retain control of direction and leadership while states, districts and voluntary associations (if and when involved), groups of activists and communities will implement the national vision. To put the best face on this move, it could be seen as the Indian version of Chinese "democratic centralism."

Voluntary associations, which during 1978-79 are supposed (and known) to have made irresponsible use of the role and resources provided to them, continue to be in disfavor. They are to be allowed no more than 20 per cent of the total coverage and that too under strict accountability. On the other hand, considerably greater stock is put into educational institutions and students in universities, colleges and higher secondary schools. This trust in schools and students may be misplaced since the curriculum organization in Indian education is

absolutely incompatible with service to the communities outside the schools and because of the middle class orientation and socialization of the schooled in India. As a consequence, the NPAE begins to look more and more like the burden of bureaucracy.

A grassroot institution at the community level is proposed in the form of Jan Shiksha Nilyams (JNS's) -- learning resource centers to serve clusters of villages. While conceptually unexceptional, it is felt by some that rural folks, especially women, are unlikely to walk to another village to make use of the JNS's facilities and resources and that following the school-community route would have been a much better idea.

There is indication that policy makers and planners are aware of the need for making institutional interfaces and networks between and among the institutions of adult education and those of development extension. However, all the necessary mechanisms seem to be lacking and those existing seem to lack the necessary strength.

The target of a 100 million between the ages of 15-35 years remains, the target date, however, has slipped further. Under the NAEP it was 1985; under AEP it was 1990. Now under NPAE it is 1995. Significantly, funds provided for the program may not be commensurate with requirements. As Tarlok Singh, an eminent member of the Planning Commission, now retired, comments, inspite of all the rhetoric, government's own commitment to adult literacy remains unconvincing; and allocation of funds insufficient (30). Prem Kirpal, former Secretary, Union Ministry of Education and Dr. D.D. Tewari, one-time President of the Indian Adult Education Association who also spoke at the same

forum had similar misgivings about implementation of the program which Tewari found lacking in "the thrill of people's involvement, the courage of conviction and appreciative support of the field workers or teachers by and large."

To sum, in the calculus of ideology and technology of the NPAE, the technology is quite all right, but the ideology is not. There is a lack of political commitment. If anything, the political climate has worsened for the NPAE as a government program. Indian is going through a period when the social consensus is breaking down (30). The Prime Minister who initiated the policy review is in considerable political trouble as his leadership is faltering. He is unable to provide the moral example that will make the millions and millions of people to make their personal commitments to literacy and development. While the prognosis is not good for NPAE as "a government program", that does not mean that no literacy work is possible in India today. Indeed, the institutionalization of adult literacy education since the Desai initiative of 1978 will ensure continuation of literacy work at some level, howsoever, minimal. The present political conditions, if anything, open up new opportunities for non-governmental programs undertaken on the initiatives of peoples themselves. The role of the intelligentsia and of activist groups in adult literacy promotion at this moment in Indian history is as important as it is unlikely.

Notes and References

1. The phrase "adult literacy education" has been used in the paper to cover both "adult literacy" and "adult education." All of the three descriptors will be used in the body of the paper as appropriate.

2. According to the latest available statistics for India, more than 70 per cent of the population above 25 years of age had never been inside a school. Refer, Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Education in asia and the pacific: Statistical indicators 1987. (A pictorial chart). Bangkok, Thailand: Unesco Regional Office, 1987. For world statistics on education, see Unesco. Statistical yearbook, 1986. Paris: Unesco, 1986.

3. Bhola, H. S. The design of (educational) policy: Directing and harnessing social power for social outcomes. Viewpoints, 1975, 51(3), 1-16.

4. The methodology of social sciences has undergone a significant paradigm shift during the last twenty-five years or more. The pretentions to making "policy analysis" into an objective enterprise and an exact science have been abandoned. See House, Peter W. The art of public policy analysis. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982. The new paradigms of social sciences are discussed in Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (Eds.). Human inquiry: A sourcebook of new paradigm research. New York: Wiley, 1981.

5. A considerable body of literature has become available on the subject of institution-building that also includes some discussion on institutional analysis. See Blase, Melvin G.

Institution-building: A sourcebook. (Revised edition) Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985.

6. Braybrook, D. and Lindblom, C.E. A strategy of decision: Policy evaluation as a social process. New York: The Free Press, 1963.

7. The essential conceptual structure of this model was first presented in Bhola, H.S. Campaigning for literacy: Eight national experiences of the twentieth century, with a memorandum to decision-makers. Paris: Unesco, 1984, pp. 196-199. An intermediate version of the model appeared in Bhola, H.S. The politics of adult literacy: An international perspective. Journal of Reading, April 1988.

8. The differences among and between the three approaches to literacy promotion -- the project approach, the program approach and the campaign approach -- have been discussed in Bhola, H.S. with Muller, Josef and Dijkstra, Piet. The promise of literacy campaigns, programs and projects. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, pp. 205-206.

9. Sandeep, P. Values for Indian adult education. Paper presented to the World Congress in Education held at Universite du Quebec a Trois Rivieres, Canada, during July 6-10, 1981.

10. Myrdal, Gunnar. Asian drama: An inquiry into the poverty of nations. New York: Pantheon, 1968, pp. 257-303.

11. Das, Arvind N. De-politicisation of politics: Democracy by other means. India Tribune (Chicago), December 26, 1987.

12. Inkeles, Alex and Smith, David H. Becoming modern: Individual change in six developing countries. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.

13. The planning process was taken up in earnest in India with the establishment of the Planning Commission in 1950 by the Central Cabinet. The first Five Year Plan began in 1951/1952. See Tata. Statistical outline of India 1982. Bombay: Tata Services, Department of Economics and Statistics, 1982, p. 178, for the years covered by the successive plans until the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan in 1984/85. The Seventh Five Year Plan is now under implementation. See, Government of India, Planning Commission. Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90. (Vol I, and Vol. II) New Delhi: Planning Commission, Government of India, 1985.

14. Singh, Sohan. History of adult education during British period. Delhi: Indian Adult Education Association, 1957.

15. Government of India, Ministry of Education and Culture. Report of the review committee on the National Adult Education Programme. New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, 1980.

16. Government of India, Ministry of Education. Report of the education commission (1964-66): Education and national development. New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1966.

17. Quoted from the Government of India, Planning Commission, Seventh Five Year Plan, 1985-90. Vol. II. New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1985, p.252.

18. Government of India. National adult education programme: An outline (With modifications up to July 15, 1978). New Delhi: The Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, 1978.

19. Government of India. National adult education programme: The first year. New Delhi: The Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1979.

20. Adiseshiah, Malcolm S. Adult education: Second phase, International literacy day souvenir 1982. Trivandrum, University of Kerala, 1982.

21. Bhola, H.S. Adult literacy for development in India: An analysis of policy and performance. In Arnove, Robert F. and Graff, Harvey J. (Eds.) Literacy campaigns in historical and comparative perspectives. New York: Plenum Press, 1987.

22. Government of India, Ministry of Education and Culture. Report of the Review Committee.

23. Government of India, Ministry of Education and Culture. Adult Education Programme: Policy perspective and strategies for implementation. New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, 1983.

24. Unesco Regional Office, Education in asia and the pacific.

25. Government of India, Ministry of Education. Challenge of education -- A policy perspective. New Delhi: Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1985.

26. Some 10,000 responses seem to have been received and analysed and published for limited circulation by the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi under the general title: Towards Restructuring Indian Education. Some of the material read for the purposes of this review included: Citizens' Perceptions (Vol. I, and Vol. II), 1985; A Viewpoint of the Press, 1986; and Perceptions from States, 1986.

27. Government of India. National policy on education -- 1986. New Delhi: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, May 1986.

28. Government of India. National policy on education -- 1986: Programme of action. Chapter on Adult Education reproduced in Directorate of Education Newsletter, X(4), pp. 8-15, April 1987.

29. Observations by Tarlok Singh, Dr. D.D. Tewari and Prem Kirpal reported here were made at the Round Table on Implementation of Adult Education Programme under the New Education Policy Convened by the Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi, January 30-31, 1987, reported in the Indian Journal of Adult Education, 48(1), January-March, 1987.

30. Sarkaria Commission report: Rough weather ahead for Indian states. India Tribune (Chicago), February 20, 1988.